FRIENDS OF FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE

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www.fishbournefriends.info

what3words: blissful.encrusted.mega

Member, British Association of Friends of Museums

Issue 40

YES, THE BEGGING BOWL IS OUT

The Mary Rose museum in Portsmouth is said to have received a grant of £25,000 from the government to help tide it over the Lockdown, but such help will not be available to all of Britain's 2500 museums and 185,000 registered charities. Some organisations will inevitably be unable to survive. Don't let that happen to the Palace.

Sussex Archaeological Society (SAS), which owns the Palace and seven other historic sites in East Sussex, receives no national or local government funding and depends on its members, visitors to its sites, grants and special events to keep it in business. Fishbourne Roman Palace has been closed since Lockdown began, so no money is coming in. The Property Manager Melanie Marsh says there is some cause for optimism; since 3 June the Palace Cafe is again open, for takeaway service only, Mondays to Fridays, and SAS hope to open the Palace to visitors some time in July. But that is still weeks off and it's a question of surviving until then.

Similarly we, the Friends, rely on our members' subscriptions and donations to enable us to make grants to the Palace for purchases which its budget would otherwise not bear. If you could kindly afford a donation, either to us for direct assistance to the Palace, or to SAS generally, we should be most grateful.

For SAS go to their website www.sussexpast.co.uk/home then Save our Society. SAS is a charity so do Gift Aid your donation if you are eligible.

For the Friends send a cheque to the treasurer Mr Paddy Thomas, Flat 29, Holly Tree, Mark Anthony Court, HAYLING ISLAND, Hants PO11 0AE, or
bank transfer to TSB Bank, Sort Code 30-15-42 a/c 18431568 Friends of Fishbourne Roman Palace.

To see the diverse kinds of help we have given the Palace over our 15 years existence go to the Projects page of our website. And thank you!

OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Having had to postpone our planned Spring AGM we are now planning for **Saturday 5 September**. Pop the date in your diaries now. The AGM will be accompanied by a talk on the re-creation at Butser Ancient farm of the 4th century geometric mosaic from Sparsholt Roman villa.

THE MEMBERS OF THE FRIENDS OF FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE

Joan Rundle

The Palace has a small but dedicated and loyal group of Friends, around 75 in number. The bulk of them reside in West Sussex and East Hampshire, underlining the affection with which local people hold the Palace. A few, like my husband and me, are drawn in from further afield, because of a passion for history and old buildings coupled with the wonderful story of the uncovering and preserving of this unique place.

Fishbourne is very generous to its Friends – the Family membership admits two adults and up to four children (or grandchildren) on production of the membership card. On joining we are offered discounts in both shop and cafeteria and a complimentary guidebook. We are also welcomed as volunteers and participants at the special events days.

As members, our financial support is crucial and each year I am delighted – but not at all surprised – by the donations which frequently accompany the renewed subscription. Loyal AND generous. We also have the most unusual treasurer of my varied committee experiences – Paddy just LOVES to spend your money! We see it as both duty and privilege to provide funding for projects large and small as requested by the Palace team - plants for the garden and equipment upgrades for the gardener, and most recently, supporting the Palace's latest venture of a second hand bookshop by funding the new shelving required.

A couple of things surprise me. With such a local membership, I am a little disappointed that more members do not attend the Annual General Meeting. It is a convivial day, a chance to meet others and to appreciate the enthusiastic hard work of the committee, AND the lectures are always interesting and thought provoking. The 2020 AGM will be enhanced by a talk from the Butser Ancient Farm team who recreated the Sparsholt mosaic now in Winchester Museum; every tessera laid by hand and adorning the central reception space of their own Sparsholt Villa.

I am also surprised by the size (or lack of it) of our Friends' membership list. To my way of thinking, Fishbourne ranks alongside Hadrian's Wall as one of the most significant Roman sites in Northern Europe, and it is amazing that membership numbers do not reflect this. When I began my time as Membership Secretary, I put together a suggestions list to generate interest and an increase in our membership. Perhaps now is the time to revisit this? For now though, our best advertisement is our existing members. Be proactive in your support for the Palace and the Friends; take family and friends for a day out and encourage them to join; spread the word about this jewel of our ancient past in the WI, church groups and clubs; encourage members' days outings to Fishbourne.

Above all, enjoy your membership – we are so grateful for your continued support. Long may it continue.

Published by
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